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DANTE

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Tomb of Dante at Ravenna

DANTE

His Life and Writings

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F.C. 1771

BY

OSCAR BROWNING

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To

HENRY MONTAGU BUTLER,

MASTER OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,

WHO FIRST TAUGHT ME TO KNOW

AND LOVE DANTE.

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PREFACE.

This book is based upon an article in the last edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica.* It has been carefully revised in accordance with the most recent publications on the subject, the most important of which is the volume of Prolegomeni which completes Scartazzini's edition of the *Divina Commedia.*

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DANTE.

Family and Birth.

DANTE, or Durante Alighieri, was born at Florence about the middle of May, 1265. He was descended from an ancient family, but not one of the highest rank. His biographers have attempted on very slight grounds to deduce his origin from the Frangipani, one of the oldest senatorial families of Rome. We can affirm with greater certainty that he was connected with the Elisei who took part in the building of Florence under Charles the Great. Dante himself does not, with the excep-

tion of a few obscure and scattered allusions, carry his ancestry beyond the warrior Cacciaguida, whom he met in Paredri, in the sphere of Mars (*Par.* xv. 87–148). Cacciaguida there tells his descendant that he was born at Florence, and was baptized there in the Baptistry of San Giovanni, that he had two brothers, Moronte and Eliseo, that he married a wife who was born in the valley of the Po, that he accompanied the Emperor Conrad III. upon his crusade into the Holy Land, where he died among the infidels. In the following canto (xvi. 34, foll.), Cacciaguida further states that he was born in the *sesto* of Porta San Pietro, in the very centre of the city. Of Cacciaguida's brothers Moronte and Eliseo we know absolutely

nothing. He had two sons Alighiero and Preitenitto. Alighiero had also two sons, Bello and Bellincione. Bello was father of Geri del Bello, placed by Dante in the *Inferno*, and of three other sons. Bellincione had amongst other sons a second Alighiero, father of the famous poet. This Alighiero married Lapi di Chiarissimo Cialuffi, and after his death a certain Madonna Bella, whose surname is not known. Alighiero had one daughter, who was married to Leone Poggi, a son, Francesco, who married Pietra di Donato Brunatti, and a son, Dante. Thus the family of Dante held a respectable but not a noble position among the citizens of his beloved Florence. Had they been reckoned in the very first rank, they

could not have remained in Florence after the defeat of the Guelfs at Montaperti in 1260. It is clear, however, that Dante's mother did so remain, for Dante was born in Florence in 1265. The heads of the Guelf party did not return till after the battle of Beneventum, which was fought on February 26, 1266.

Education.

Dante was born under the sign of the twins, "the glorious stars pregnant with virtue, to whom he owes his genius such as it is." Astrologers considered this constellation as favourable to literature and science, and Brunetto Latini, Dante's preceptor, tells him in the *Inferno* (xv. 25, foll.) that, if he follows its guidance, he cannot fail to reach the harbour of fame. Boccaccio relates

that before his birth his mother dreamed that she lay under a very lofty laurel, growing in a green meadow, by a very clear fountain, when she felt the pangs of childbirth; that her child, feeding on the berries which fell from the laurel, and on the waters of the fountain, in a very short time became a shepherd, and attempted to reach the leaves of the laurel, the fruit of which had nurtured him; that, trying to obtain them, he fell, and rose up, no longer a man, but in the guise of a peacock. We know little of Dante's boyhood except that he was a hard student and a pupil of Brunetto Latini. Boccaccio tells us that he became very familiar with Vergil, Horace, Ovid, and Statius, and all other famous poets; and that, "taken by the

sweetness of knowing the truth of the things concealed in heaven, and finding no other pleasure dearer to him in life, he left all other worldly care and gave himself to this alone; and that no part of philosophy might remain unseen by him, he plunged with acute intellect into the deepest recesses of theology, and so far succeeded in his design that, caring nothing for heat or cold, or watchings or fastings, or any other bodily discomforts, by assiduous study he came to know of the divine essence and of the other separate intelligences all that the human intellect can comprehend." Leonardo Bruni says that "by study of philosophy, of theology, astrology, arithmetic, and geometry, by reading of history, by the turning over many

curious books, watching and sweating in his studies, he acquired the science which he was to adorn and explain in his verses." Of his teacher, Brunetto Latini, of whom he speaks with the most loving gratitude and affection, but whose gross vices he does not hesitate to brand with infamy, Giovanni Villani has left us a graphic picture: "He was a great philosopher, and a consummate master of rhetoric, not only in knowing how to speak well, but how to write well. He it was who explained the rhetoric of Tully and made the good and useful book called *Tesoro*, and the *Tesoretto* and the *Chiave del Tesoro*, and other works in philosophy and of vices and virtues, and he was secretary of our commune. He was a worldly man; but

we have made mention of him because he both began and directed the growth of the Florentines, both in making them ready in speaking well and in knowing how to guide and direct our republic according to the rules of politics." Under this guidance Dante became master of all the science of his age at a time when it was not impossible to know all that could be known. He was a skilful draughtsman, and tells us that on the anniversary of the death of Beatrice he drew an angel on a tablet.

Friends

He was an intimate friend of Giotto, who has immortalized his youthful lineaments in the chapel of the Bargello, and who is recorded to have drawn from his friend's inspiration the allegories of Virtue and Vice which fringe the

frescoes of the Scrovegni Chapel at Padua. Nor was he less sensible to the delights of music. Milton had not a keener ear for the loud uplifted angel trumpets and the immortal harps of golden wires of the cherubim and seraphim; and our English poet was proud to compare his own friendship with Henry Lawes with that between Dante and Casella, "met in the milder shades of Purgatory." Most dear to him of all were the companions Cino di Pistoia, Lapo Gianni, Guido Cavalcanti, and others, similarly gifted and dowered with like tastes, who lived in the lively streets of the city of the flowers, and felt with him the first warm flush of the coming renaissance. He has written no sweeter or more melodious lines than

those in which he expresses the wish that he, with Guido and Lapo, might be wafted by enchantment over the sea wheresoever they might list, shielded from fortune and evil times, and living in such contentment that they should wish to live always, and that the good enchanter should bring Monna Vanna and Monna Bice and that other lady into their barque, where they should for ever discourse of love and be for ever happy. It is a wonderful thing (says Leonardo Bruni) that, though he studied without intermission, it would not have appeared to any one that he studied, from his joyous mien and youthful conversation. Like Milton, he was trained in the strictest academical education which the age afforded; but Dante lived

under a warmer sun and brighter skies, and found in the rich variety and gaiety of his early life a defence against the withering misfortunes of his later years. Milton felt too early the chill breath of Puritanism, and the serious musing on the experience of life, which saddened the verse of both poets, deepened in his case into grave and desponding melancholy.

Political Life.

We must now consider the political circumstances in which lay the activity of Dante's manhood. From 1115, the year of the death of Matilda, countess of Tuscany, to 1215, Florence enjoyed a nearly uninterrupted peace. Attached to the Guelf party, it remained undivided against itself. But in 1215 a private feud between the families of Buondel-

monte and Uberti introduced into the city the horrors of civil war. Villani (lib. v., cap. 38) relates how Buondelmonte de' Buondelmonti, a noble youth of Florence, being engaged to marry a lady of the house of Amidei, allied himself instead to a Donati, and how Buondelmonte was attacked and killed by the Amidei and Uberti at the foot of the Ponte Vecchio, close by the pilaster which bears the image of Mars. "The death of Messer Buondelmonte was the occasion and beginning of the accursed parties of Guelfs and Ghibellines in Florence." Of the seventy-two families then in Florence, thirty-nine became Guelf under the leadership of the Buondelmonte, and the rest Ghibelline under the Uberti. The strife of parties was

for a while allayed by the war against Pisa in 1222, and the constant struggles against Siena; but, in 1248, Frederick II. sent into the city his natural son, Frederick, prince of Antioch, with 1,600 German knights. The Guelfs were driven away from the town, and took refuge, part in Montevarchi, part in Capraia. The Ghibellines, masters of Florence, behaved with great severity, and destroyed the towers and palaces of the Guelf nobles. At last the people became impatient. They rose in rebellion, deposed the podestà, elected in his place a captain of the people, established a more democratic constitution, and, encouraged by the death of Frederick in December, 1250, recalled the exiled Guelfs. Manfred, the bastard son of

Frederick, pursued the policy of his father. He stimulated the Ghibelline Uberti to rebel against their position of subjection. A rising of the vanquished party was put down by the people, in July, 1258, the Ghibellines were expelled from the town, and the towers of the Uberti razed to the ground. The exiles betook themselves to the friendly city of Siena. Manfred sent them assistance. The Florentines, after vainly demanding their surrender, despatched an army against them. On September 4, 1260, was fought the great battle Montaperti, which dyed the Arbia red, and in which the Guelfs were entirely defeated. The hand which held the banner of the republic was sundered by the sword of a traitor. For the first

time in the history of Florence the Caroccio was taken. Florence lay at the mercy of her enemies. A parliament was held at Empoli, in which the deputies of Siena, Pisa, Arezzo, and other Tuscan towns consulted on the best means of securing their new war power. They voted that the accursed Guelf city should be blotted out. But Farinata of the Uberti stood up in their midst, bold and defiant as when he stood erect among the sepulchres of hell, and said that if, from the whole number of the Florentines he alone should remain, he would not suffer, whilst he could yield a sword, that his country should be destroyed, and that, if it were necessary to die a thousand times for her, a thousand times would he be ready to

encounter death. Help came to the Guelfs from an unexpected quarter. Clement IV., elected pope in 1265, offered the crown of Apulia and Sicily to Charles of Anjou. The French prince, passing rapidly through Lombardy, Romagna, and the Marches, reached Rome by way of Spoleto, was crowned on January 6, 1266, and on February 26, defeated and killed Manfred at Benevento. In such a storm of conflict did Dante first see the light. In 1267, the Guelfs were recalled; but instead of settling down in peace with their opponents, they summoned Charles of Anjou to vengeance, and the Ghibellines were driven out. The meteor passage of Conradin gave hope to the imperial party, which was quenched

when the head of the fair-haired boy fell on the scaffold at Naples. Pope after pope tried in vain to make peace. Gregory X. placed the rebellious city under an interdict; Nicolas III. in 1280 patched up a hollow truce. In 1282, the constitution of Florence received the final form which it retained till the collapse of freedom. From the three *arti maggiori* were chosen six priors, in whose hands was placed the government of the republic. They remained in office for two months, and during that time lived and shared a common table in the Public Palace. We shall see what influence this office had upon the fate of Dante. The success of the Sicilian Vespers, the vacancy of the Holy See, the death of Charles

of Anjou, roused again the courage of the Ghibellines. They took possession of Arezzo, and threatened to drive out the Guelfs from Tuscany. The historian Ammirato has left us a lively account of the skirmishes against Arezzo in the year 1288, a prelude to the great battle of Campaldino in the following summer. Then it was that Dante saw "horsemen moving camp and commencing the assault, and holding muster, and the march of foragers, the shock of tournaments, and race of jousts, now with trumpets and now with bells, with drums and castle signals, with native things and foreign" (*Inf.* xxii. 1, foll.). On June 11, 1289, at Campaldino near Poppi, in the Casentino, the Ghibellines were utterly defeated. They

never again recovered their hold on Florence, but the violence of faction survived under other names. Dante fought with distinction at Campaldino, was present shortly afterwards at the battle of Caprona (*Inf.* xxi. 95, foll.), and returned in September, 1289, to his studies and his love. His peace was of short duration. On June 9, 1290, died Beatrice, whose mortal love had guided him for thirteen years, and whose immortal spirit purified his later life, and revealed to him the mysteries of Paradise.

Beatrice.

Dante had first met Beatrice Portinari at the house of her father Folco, on May Day, 1274. In his own words, "already nine times after my birth the heaven of light had returned as it were

to the same point, when there appeared to my eyes the glorious lady of my mind, who was by many called Beatrice, who knew not what to call her. She had already been so long in this life that already in its time the starry heaven had moved toward the east the twelfth part of a degree, so that she appeared to me about the beginning of her ninth year, and I saw her about the end of my ninth year. Her dress on that day was of a most noble colour, a subdued and goodly crimson, girdled and adorned in such sort as best suited with her tender age. At that moment I saw most truly that the spirit of life which hath its dwelling in the secretest chamber of the heart began to tremble so violently that the least pulses of my

body shook therewith; and in trembling it said these words, 'Ecce deus fortior me qui veniens dominabitur mihi.'" In the *Vita Nuova* is written the story of his passion from its commencement to within a year after the lady's death. He saw Beatrice only once or twice, and she probably knew little of him. She married Simone de' Bardi. But the worship of her lover was stronger for the remoteness of its object. The last chapter of the *Vita Nuova* relates how, after the lapse of a year, "it was given me to behold a wonderful vision, wherein I saw things which determined me that I would say nothing further of this blessed one until such time as I could discourse more worthily concerning her. And to this end I labour all I can, as

she in truth knoweth. Therefore if it be His pleasure through whom is the life of all things that my life continue with me a few years, it is my hope that I shall yet write concerning her what hath not before been written of any woman. After the which may it seem good unto Him who is the Master of grace that my spirit should go hence to behold the glory of its lady, to wit, of that blessed Beatrice who now gloriously gazes on the countenance of Him qui est per omnia sæcula benedictus." In the *Convito* he resumes the story of his life. "When I had lost the first delight of my soul (that is, Beatrice), I remained so pierced with sadness that no comforts availed me anything; yet after some time my mind, desirous of health,

sought to return to the method by which other disconsolate ones had found consolation, and I set myself to read that little-known book of Boetius in which he consoled himself when a prisoner and an exile. And hearing that Tully had written another work, in which, treating of friendship, he had given words of consolation to Lælius, I set myself to read that also." He so far recovered from the shock of his loss that in 1292 he married Gemma, daughter of Manetto Donati, a connection of the celebrated Corso Donati, afterwards Dante's bitter foe. It is possible that she is the lady mentioned in the *Vita Nuova* as sitting full of pity at her window and comforting Dante for his sorrow. By this wife he had

seven children; and although he never mentions her in the *Divina Commedia*, and although she did not accompany him into exile, there is no reason to suppose that she was other than a good wife, or that the union was otherwise than happy. Certain it is that he spares the memory of Corso in his great poem, and speaks kindly of his kinsmen Piccarda and Forese.

Office. Exile.

Dante now began to take an active part in politics. He was inscribed in the *arte* of the *Medici* and *Speziali*, which made him eligible as one of the six *priori*, to whom the government of the city was entrusted in 1282. According to documents still existing in the archives of Florence, he appeared in public life on December 10, 1296, and

on March 14, 1297, when he offered to the Council of the Centumviri a grant of money to enable Charles, king of Jerusalem and of Sicily, to subdue the rebel Sicilians. In both cases he was unsuccessful.* Filelfo says that Dante served on fourteen embassies, a statement not only unsupported by evidence, but impossible in itself. An embassy, which Filelfo does not mention, to the town of San Gemignano, in 1299, does not rest on very good evidence. The one public employment, which we know Dante to have held, is of a nature which we should not have expected. In April, 1301, a proposal was made to widen and straighten the Via di San Procolo from the Borgo della Piangentina as far as the Torrente Affrico. For this purpose

it was necessary to pull down the house of Ruba d'Allerone.* This work was entrusted to the care of Dante Alighieri, a notary and secretary being attached to him as an assistant. It is possible from this circumstance that Dante had been trained as an architect. From June 15 to August 15, 1300, Dante held the office of prior, which, as he informs us, was the source of all the miseries of his life. The spirit of faction had again broken out in Florence. The two rival families were the Cerchi and the Donati, —the first of great wealth, but recent origin; the last of ancient ancestry, but poor. A quarrel had arisen in Pistoia between the two branches of the Cancellieri,—the Bianchi and Neri, the Whites and the Blacks.* The quarrel

spread to Florence, where the Donati took the side of the Blacks, the Cerchi of the Whites. Pope Boniface VIII., who was very anxious to make Tuscany a province of the Holy See, was asked to mediate, and sent Cardinal Matteo d'Acquasparta to maintain peace. He arrived just as Dante entered upon his office as prior. The cardinal effected nothing, and in December, 1300, the heads of the different factions were banished in different directions to a distance from the capital. The Blacks were sent to Città della Pieve in the Tuscan mountains; the Whites, amongst whom was Dante's dearest friend Guido Cavalcanti, to Serezzano, in the unhealthy Maremma. After some time both parties returned, Guido Cavalcanti

so ill with fever that he shortly afterwards died. The journey of Charles of Valois to Rome gave the Blacks the opportunity of gaining the upper hand. At a meeting held in the church of the Holy Trinity the Whites were denounced as Ghibellines, enemies of France and the Pope, and the French prince was invited to the town as peacemaker, to defend the Guelfs against machinations. Charles of Valois marched from Pavia and took up his abode in the Oltr' Arno, on All Saints' Day, 1301. Five days afterwards the signory and the protection of the city were committed to him. Corso Donati, who had been banished a second time, returned in force, and summoned the Blacks to arms. The prisons were broken open,

the podestà driven from the town, the Cerchi confined within their houses, while a third of the city was destroyed with fire and sword. By the help of Charles the Blacks were victorious. They appointed Cante de' Gabrielli of Gubbio as podestà, a man devoted to their interests. More than 600 Whites were condemned to exile and cast as beggars upon the world. Their houses were destroyed and their property confiscated. On January 27, 1302, Dante, with three others, was accused of malversation and other crimes, and was condemned to pay a fine of 5,000 small florins. If the money was not paid within three days, their property was to be destroyed and laid waste; if they did pay the fine, they were to be exiled

for two years from Tuscany; in any case they were never again to hold office in the republic. Forty days later, on March 10 of the same year, not having obeyed the citation, Dante, with fourteen others, was condemned to be burned alive if they should come into the power of the republic. Similar sentences were passed on September 2, 1311, and on November 6, 1315. It is clear from Villani that the charge of malversation was of a political nature, and was founded on Dante's conduct in his office as prior. Dante received the news of his banishment at Siena. Foreseeing the fate which awaited him, he had left the city and never saw its towers again. It has been said that he was at this time absent on an embassy to Pope Boniface

VIII., but it is doubtful whether the embassy was ever sent, and it is certain that Dante never formed part of it.

The exiles met first at Gargonza, a castle between Siena and Arezzo, and then at Arezzo itself. They joined themselves to the Ghibellines, to which party the podestà Uguccione della Faggiuola belonged. The Ghibellines, however, were divided amongst themselves, and the Green Ghibellines were not disposed to favour the cause of the White Guelfs. They found a more sympathetic defender in Scarpetta degli Ordelaffi at Forlì. From this place Dante probably went to Bartolommeo della Scala, lord of Verona, where the country of the great Lombard gave him his first refuge and his first hospitable Exile.

reception. Can Grande, to whom he afterwards dedicated the *Paradiso*, was then a boy. Bartolommeo died in 1304, and it is possible that Dante may have remained in Verona till his death. In September, 1303, to use the language of Dante, the fleur-de-lis had entered Anagni, and Christ had a second time been buffeted in the person of his vicar. Boniface VIII. did not survive the insult long, but died in the following month. He was succeeded by Benedict XI., who did his best to give peace to his distracted country. Immediately after his accession the Pope sent the Cardinal da Prato to Florence, who arrived there in March, 1304. The people received him with enthusiasm; ambassadors came to him from the Whites; and he did his

best to reconcile the two parties. But the Blacks resisted all his efforts. He shook the dust from off his feet, and departed, leaving the city under an interdict. Foiled by the calumnies and machinations of the one party, the cardinal gave his countenance to the other. It happened that Corso Donati and the heads of the Black party were absent at Pistoia. Da Prato advised the Whites to attack Florence, deprived of its heads and impaired by fire. An army was collected of 16,000 foot and 9,000 horse. Communications were opened with the Ghibellines of Bologna and Romagna. But the forces of the exiles, badly led, reached the gates of the city only to find themselves unsupported from within. They were driven to retreat, all

hope of return became impossible, and Dante felt for the first time the full bitterness of exile. It was after the failure of this ill-conceived attempt that Dante's wanderings really began. Filled with contempt at the baseness and incapacity of his fellow sufferers, he wished that, disdaining the support of their companionship, he had stood alone, and made a party by himself. This, indeed, we must consider Dante to have done, if we would understand the real nature of his Ghibellinism. Dante had been born and bred a Guelf, and it was only under the pressure of inevitable necessity that he and his friends allied themselves with the other side. If we rise beyond the limits of mere local quarrels, we find in Italian history that

Dante's Ghibellinism.

the Guelf party was, generally speaking, favourable to liberty. The municipal privileges of the great Italian cities rose under the protection of the popes, while the emperors only crossed the Alps to crush their ancient independence, and depress them beneath the yoke of some feudal representative. The horse of the emperor Barbarossa trampled upon the ashes of Milan, whereas the straw-built fortress of the Lombard league bore the name of Pope Alexander. Had it not breathed the air of freedom, the life of Florence could not have survived the period of its infancy, stifled as it afterwards was by the preponderance of the Medici. Dante could not have been indifferent or ungrateful to the cause which had given to his beloved Italy all

that made it valuable to the world. But he saw that the conditions of the time were altered, and that other dangers menaced the welfare of his country. There was no fear now that Florence, Siena, Pisa, Arezzo should be razed to the ground in order that the castle of the lord might overlook the humble cottages of his contented subjects; but there was danger lest Italy should be torn in sunder by its own jealousies and passions, and lest the fair domain bounded by the sea and the Alps should never properly assert the force of its individuality, and should present a contemptible contrast to a united France and a confederated Germany. Sick with petty quarrels and dissensions, Dante strained his eyes towards the hills

for the appearance of a deliverer, who should hush the jar of discord, discipline into effectiveness the luxuriant forces of the peninsula, and, united in spiritual harmony with the vicar of Christ, show for the first time to the world an example of a government where the strongest force and the highest wisdom were interpenetrated by all that God had given to the world of piety and justice. In this sense and in no other was Dante a Ghibelline. The vision was never realized—the hope was never fulfilled. Not till our own day has Italy become united and the "greyhound of deliverance" has chased from city to city the "wolf" of the papacy. But is it possible to say that the dream did not work its own realization, or to

deny that the high ideal of the poet, after inspiring a long succession of minds as lofty as his own, has become after five hundred years embodied in the constitution of a state which acknowledges no stronger bond of union than a common worship of the exile's indignant and impassioned verse?

Wanderings.

It is very difficult to determine with exactness the order and the place of Dante's wanderings. Many cities and castles in Italy have claimed the honour of giving him shelter, or of being for a time the home of his inspired muse. He certainly spent some time with Count Guido Salvatico in the Casentino near the sources of the Arno, probably in the castle of Porciano, and with Uguccione in the castle of Faggiuola in

the mountains of Urbino. After this he is said to have visited the University of Bologna; and in August, 1306, we find him at Padua. Cardinal Napoleon Orsini, the legate of the French Pope Clement V., had put Bologna under a ban, dissolved the university, and driven the professors to the northern city. In May or June, 1307, the same cardinal collected the Whites at Arezzo and tried to induce the Florentines to recall them. The name of Dante is found attached to a document signed by the Whites in the church of St. Gaudenzio in the Mugello. This enterprise came to nothing. Dante retired to the castle of Moroello della Spina in the Lunigiana, where the marble ridges of the Apennines descend in precipitous slopes to the Gulf of

Spezzia. From this time till the arrival of the emperor Henry VII. in Italy, October, 1310, all is uncertain. His old enemy Corso Donati had at last united himself with Uguccione della Faggiuola, the leader of the Ghibellines. Dante thought it possible that this might lead to his return. But in 1308 Corso was declared a traitor, attacked in his house, put to flight, and killed. Dante lost his last hope. He left Tuscany and went to Can Grande della Scala at Verona. From this place we may believe that he visited the University of Paris, studied in the Rue Fouarre, became acquainted with the Low Countries, and not improbably crossed the Channel and went to Oxford, and saw where the heart of Prince Harry was worshipped upon

London Bridge. The election of Henry of Luxemburg as emperor stirred again his hopes of a deliverer. He left Paris and returned hastily to Italy. At the end of 1310, in a letter to the princes and people of Italy, he proclaimed the coming of the saviour; at Milan he did personal homage to his sovereign. The Florentines made every preparation to resist the emperor. Dante wrote from the Casentino a letter dated March 31, 1311, in which he rebuked them for their stubbornness and obstinacy. Henry still lingered in Lombardy at the siege of Cremona, when Dante, on April 16, 1311, in a celebrated epistle, upbraided his delay, argued that the crown of Italy was to be won on the Arno rather than on the Po; and urged the tarrying

emperor to hew the rebellious Florentines like Agag in pieces before the Lord. Henry was as deaf to this exhortation as the Florentines themselves. After reducing Lombardy he passed from Genoa to Pisa, and on June 29, 1312, was crowned in Rome. Then at length he moved towards Tuscany by way of Umbria. Leaving Cortona and Arezzo, he reached Florence on September 19. He did not dare to attack it, but returned in November to Pisa. In the summer of the following year he prepared to invade the kingdom of Naples; but in the neighbourhood of Siena he caught a fever and died at the monastery of Buonconvento, August 24, 1313. The hopes of Dante and his party were buried in his grave.

After the death of the emperor Henry (Bruni tells us) Dante passed the rest of his life in great poverty, sojourning in various places throughout Lombardy, Tuscany, and the Romagna, under the protection of various lords, until at length he retired to Ravenna, where he ended his life. Very little can be added to this meagre story. There is reason for supposing that he stayed at Gubbio with Bosone dei Rafaelli, and tradition assigns him a cell in the monastery of St. Croce di Fonte Avellana in the same district, situated on the slopes of Catria, one of the highest of the Apennines. After the death of Pope Clement V. he addressed a letter, dated July 14, 1314, to the cardinals in conclave, urging them to elect an Italian pope. About this

Old Age and Death.

time he came to Lucca, then lately conquered by his friend Uguccione, completed the last cantos of the *Purgatory*, and became enamoured of the courteous Gentucca, whose name had been whispered to him by her countrymen on the slopes of the Mountain of Purification. In August, 1315, was fought the battle of Monte Catini, a day of humiliation and mourning for the Guelfs. Uguccione made but little use of his victory; and the Florentines marked their vengeance on his adviser by condemning Dante yet once again to death if he ever should come into their power. In the beginning of the following year Uguccione lost both his cities of Pisa and Lucca. At this time Dante was offered an opportunity of returning

to Florence. The conditions given to the exiles were that they should pay a fine and walk in the dress of humiliation to the church of St. John, and there do penance for their offences. Dante refused to tolerate this shame; and the letter is still extant in which he declines to enter Florence except with honour, secure that the means of life will not fail him, and that in any corner of the world he will be able to gaze at the sun and the stars, and meditate on the sweetest truths of philosophy. He preferred to take refuge with his most illustrious protector, Can Grande della Scala of Verona, then a young man of twenty-five, rich, liberal, and the favoured head of the Ghibelline party. His name has been immortalized by an eloquent pane-

gyric in the seventeenth canto of the *Paradiso*. Whilst at the court of Verona he is said to have maintained in the neighbouring city of Mantua the philosophical thesis *De Aqua et Terra*, which is included in his minor works. The last years of his life were spent at Ravenna, under the protection of Guido da Polenta. In his service Dante undertook an embassy to the Venetians. He failed in the object of his mission, and, returning disheartened and broken in spirit through the unhealthy lagoons, caught a fever and died in Ravenna, September 14, 1321. His bones still repose there. His doom of exile has been reversed by the Union of Italy, which has made the city of his birth and the various cities of his wander-

ings component members of a common country. His son Pietro, who wrote a commentary on the *Divina Commedia*, settled as judge in Verona. His daughter Beatrice lived as a nun in Ravenna. His direct line became extinct in 1509; but the blood still runs in the veins of the Marchesi Serego Alighieri, a noble family of the city of the Scaligers.

Character of Dante's Genius.

Dante may be said to have concentrated in himself the spirit of the Middle Age. Whatever there was of piety, of philosophy, of poetry, of love of nature, and of love of knowledge in those times is drawn to a focus in his writings. He is the first great name in literature after the night of the Dark [redacted] The Italian language in all its

purity and sweetness, in its aptitude for the tenderness of love and the violence of passion or the clearness of philosophical argument, sprang fully grown and fully armed from his brain. The *Vita Nuova* is still the best introduction to the study of the Tuscan tongue; the astronomy and science of the *Divine Comedy* are obscure only in a translation. Dante's reputation has passed through many vicissitudes, and much trouble has been spent by critics in comparing him with other poets of established fame. Read and commented upon in the Italian universities in the generation immediately succeeding his death, his name became obscured as the sun of the renaissance rose higher towards its meridian. In the seven-

century he was less read than Petrarch, Tasso, or Ariosto; in the eighteenth he was almost universally neglected. His fame is now fully vindicated. Translations and commentaries issue from every press in Europe and America. Dante societies are formed to investigate the difficulties of his works. He occupies in the lecture-rooms of regenerated Italy a place by the side of those great masters whose humble disciple he avowed himself to be. The *Divine Comedy* is indeed as true an epic as the *Æneid*, and Dante is as real a classic as Vergil. His metre is as pliable and flexible to every mood of emotion, his diction as plaintive and as sonorous. Like him he can immortalize, by a simple expression, a person, a place, Ages. phase of nature. Dante is even

truer in description than Vergil, whether he paints the snow falling in the Alps, or the homeward flight of birds, or the swelling of an angry torrent. But under this georgeous pageantry of poetry there lies a unity of a conception, a power of philosophic grasp, an earnestness of religion, which to the Roman poet were entirely unknown. Still more striking is the similarity between Dante and Milton. This may be said to lie rather in the kindred nature of their subjects, and in the parallel development of their minds, than in any mere external resemblance. In both the man was greater than the poet, the souls of both were "like a star and dwelt apart." Both were academically trained in the deepest studies of their age; the labour

which made Dante lean made Milton blind. The "Doricke sweetnesse" of the English poet is not absent from the tender pages of the *Vita Nuova*. The middle life of each was spent in active controversy; each lent his services to the state; each felt the quarrels of his age to be the "business of posterity," and left his warnings to ring in the ears of a later time. The lives of both were failures. "On evil days though fallen, and evil tongues," they gathered the concentrated experience of their lives into one immortal work, the quintessence of their hopes, their knowledge, and their sufferings. But Dante is something more than this. Milton's voice is grown faint to us—we have passed into other modes of expression

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and of thought. But if we had to select two names in literature who are still exercising their full influence on mankind, and whose teaching is still developing new sides to the coming generations, we should choose the names of Dante and Goethe. Goethe preached a new gospel to the world, the pagan virtue of self-culture, a sympathy which almost passed into indifference. There is no department of modern literature or thought which does not bear upon it the traces of the sage of Weimar. But if we rebel against this teaching, and yearn once more for the ardour of belief, the fervour of self-sacrifice, the scorn of scorn and the hate of hate which is the meed of the coward and the traitor, where shall we find them but in the

pages of the Florentine? The religion of the future, if it be founded on faith, will demand that faith be reconciled with all that the mind can apprehend of knowledge or the heart experience of emotion. The saint of those days will be trained, not so much on ascetic counsels of Imitation, or in Thoughts which base man's greatness on the consciousness of his fall, as on the verse of the poet, theologian, and philosopher, who stands with equal right in the conclave of the doctors and on the slopes of Parnassus, and in whom the ardour of study is one with the love of Beatrice, and both are made subservient to lift the soul from the abyss of hell, along the terraces of Purgatory, to the spheres of Paradise, till it gazes

on the ineffable revelation of the existence of God Himself, which can only be apprehended by the eye of faith.

It now only remains to give some account of Dante's works. There is no doubt that the first of his literary compositions were lyrical poems. The earliest sonnets in the *Vita Nuova*, that of the eaten hearts, was composed at the age of eighteen. His lyrics may be divided into three periods, the first ending at 1291, the second at 1313, and the third at 1321. Many of the poems he wrote have not come down to us, whereas many of those which are attributed to him are not genuine. Some of these, which have been preserved under the name of Dante, belong to Dante da Maiano, a poet of a harsher

style; others which bear the name of Aldighiero are referable to Dante's sons, Jacopo or Pietro, or to his grandsons; others may be ascribed to Dante's contemporaries and predecessors, Cino da Pistoia, and others. Those which are genuine secure Dante a place among lyrical poets scarcely if at all inferior to that of Petrarch. Fraticelli, whose edition is the best, accepts as undoubtedly genuine forty-four sonnets, ten *ballate*, twenty *canzoni*, and three *sestine*; whereas Giuliani only allows him thirty-seven sonnets, five *ballate*, twenty *canzone*, and one single *sestina*. The *Vita Nuova* or *Young Life* of Dante contains the history of the poet's love for Beatrice. Like the *In Memoriam* of Tennyson, it follows all the varying phases of

a deep and overmastering passion from its commencement to its close. He describes how he met Beatrice as a child, himself a child, how he had often sought her glance, how she once greeted him in the street, how he feigned a false love to hide his true love, how he fell ill and saw in a dream the death and transfiguration of his beloved, how she died, and how his health failed from sorrow, how the tender compassion of another lady nearly won his heart from its first affection, how Beatrice appeared to him in a vision and reclaimed his heart, and how at last he saw a vision which induced him to devote himself to study, that he might be more fit to glorify her who gazes on the Face of God for ever. This simple story is

interspersed with *sonnetti*, *ballate*, and *canzoni*, chiefly written at the time to emphasize some mood of his changing passion. After each of these in nearly every case follows an explanation in prose, which is intended to make the thought and argument intelligible to those to whom the language of poetry was not familiar. This was probably written between 1292 and 1295. The first edition is that of Sermantelli at Florence in 1516. The best edition is that of Witte, published by Brockhaus at Leipsic in 1876.

Convito.

The *Convito* or *Banquet* is the work of Dante's manhood, as the *Vita Nuova* is the work of his youth. It consists, in the form in which it has come down to us, of an introduction and three

treatises, each forming an elaborate commentary on a long *canzone*. It was intended, if completed, to have comprised commentaries on eleven more *canzoni*, making fourteen in all, and in this shape would have formed a *tesoro* or handbook of universal knowledge such as Brunetti Latini and others have left to us. It is perhaps the least known of Dante's Italian works; but crabbed and unattractive as it is in many parts, it is well worth reading, and contains many passages of great beauty and elevation. Indeed, a knowledge of it is indispensable to the full understanding of the *Divina Commedia*. The *Convito* or *Convivio*, as perhaps it had better be called, was written between April, 1307, and May, 1309. It

was probably never completed because, as we learn from the *Divine Comedy*, Dante had found reason to doubt the truth of much of the traditional scientific knowledge of his time. The present text is very corrupt. The *Convito* was first printed in Florence by Buonacini in 1490. The best editions of the *Convito* are those of Fraticelli and Giuliani.

De Vulgari Eloquentia.

Dante mentions in the *Convito* his intention of writing a treatise *di volgare eloquenzia*. The present treatise is noticed by Villani, Boccaccio, and Bruni. Its object was, first, to establish the Italian language as a literary tongue, and to distinguish between the noble speech which might become the property of the whole nation, at once a bond of

internal unity and a line of demarcation against external nations; and, secondly, to lay down rules for poetical composition in the language so established. The work was probably intended to be completed in four books, perhaps in five, but only two are extant, and these not complete. The work breaks off in the middle of a sentence. The first of these books deals with the various forms of the Italian language, the second with the style and with the composition of the *canzone*. The work was not begun till after 1309. There are three ancient manuscripts of the treatise, the Trivulziano of the fourteenth century; the MS. of Grenoble, which dates from the end of the fourteenth century, or a little later; and the Vatican manuscript, which

is a copy made in the beginning of the sixteenth century of a manuscript in the library of Lorenzo da Medici, duke of Urbino. It was first printed in the Italian version of Trissino at Vicenza in 1529. The original Latin was first published by Corbinelli at Paris in 1577. By far the best account of the work is that of Fr. d'Ovidio, included in his *Saggi Critici*, Naples, 1878.

De Monarchia.

The Latin treatise *De Monarchia*, in three books, contains the creed of Dante's Ghibellinism. The authenticity of the work is undoubted. It is mentioned by Villani, Boccaccio, and Bruni as Dante's work. In this treatise Dante propounds the theory that the supremacy of the emperor is derived from the supremacy of the Roman people over the world,

which was given to them directly from God. As the emperor is intended to insure their earthly happiness, so does their spiritual welfare depend upon the pope, to whom the emperor is to do honour as to the firstborn of the Father. The first book treats of the necessity of monarchy; in the second, he shows how the Roman people acquires of right the office of monarchy or of empire; in the third, how the office of the monarch or the emperor depends immediately upon God, and not upon the pope. He argues that the ineffable providence of God has proposed two ends to man, one the happiness of this life, the other the happiness of life eternal; each of these ends requires different means. At the first we arrive by philosophical dis-

cipline; at the second by moral and intellectual virtues, by the discipline of Faith, Hope, and Charity. The duty of controlling one of these means belongs to the emperor, of controlling the other to the pope. But the emperor must be inspired by Him who sees all the disposition of the heavens. God above elects, God above confirms, there being no one superior to Him. Those who are called electors are not really so, but merely exponents of the Divine providence. Thus the authority of the temporal monarch descends to him directly and immediately from the fountain of universal authority. Yet the Roman emperor ought to treat the pontiff with the respect which an eldest son pays to his father, both of them

being subject to the authority of God. This early statement of the Divine right of kings derived strength and confirmation after the Reformation, when the popes began to strain their power over earthly sovereigns. The usual date assigned to this work is the time of the descent of Henry VII. into Italy, that is, between 1310 and 1313. At the same time many would place it before Dante's exile. Scartazzini, after an exhaustive examination of the question, comes to the conclusion that it is impossible to decide even approximately at what time the book was written.

Eclogues. Boccaccio mentions in his Life of Dante that he wrote two eclogues in Latin in answer to Johannes de Virgilio, who invited him to come from Ravenna

to Bologna and compose a great work in the Latin language. The most interesting passage in this work is that in the first poem, where he expresses the hope that when he has finished the three parts of his great poem, his grey hairs may be crowned with laurel on the banks of the Arno. Although the Latin of these poems is superior to that of his prose works, we may feel thankful that Dante composed the great work of his life in his own vernacular.

Letters.

Villani informs us that Dante, amongst others, wrote three noble letters. One he sent to the government of Florence, lamenting that he had been exiled without blame; another he wrote to the emperor Henry VII., when he was at the siege of Brescia, reproving him for

his sloth, and prophesying the future; the third to the Italian cardinals, when the papal see was vacant, after the death of Clement, that they might agree in electing an Italian pope. These three letters remain to us; but where are the others of which Villani speaks. Is it also certain that the three we possess were really those written by Dante? At the end of the last century the only letters of Dante then known were a long letter in Latin, addressed to Can Grande della Scala, containing directions for interpreting the *Divina Commedia*, with especial reference to the *Paradiso*, the genuineness of which, although usually admitted, is not absolutely certain; and the Italian version of the letters to the princes and people of Italy and to Henry

VII. Dionisi published in 1810 a letter of Dante to a Florentine friend. In 1827 Witte published the original Latin of the letter to Henry VII. and to the Italian cardinals, and the pretended letter of Dante to Cino da Pistoia. In 1837 Theodor Heyse discovered in the Vatican Library a codex containing the ten eclogues of Petrarch, the treatise *De Monarchia*, and nine Latin letters, some of which bore the name of Dante. They were as follows: (1) to Henry VII.; (2) to the Florentines; (3, 4, and 5) to Margaret of Brabant; (6) to the grandsons of Alessandro da Romena; (7) to Moroello Malaspina; (8) to Cardinal da Prato; (9) to the princes and lords of Italy. Of these numbers 3, 4, and 5 are undoubtedly spurious; 6, 7, and

8 are probably not genuine; 1 is certainly authentic; 2 and 9 are possibly so. The letter to a Florentine friend with regard to Dante's return from exile is generally regarded as genuine; but its authenticity is doubted by Scartazzini.

De Aqua et Terra. A little book of twenty-three pages was published at Venice in 1508 by Manfredo da Monteferrato with the title "Questio florentula ac perutilis de duobus elementis Aquæ et Terræ tractans nuper reperta, quæ olim Mantuæ auspicata Veronæ vero disputata et devisa, ac manu propria scripta a Dante florentino poeta clarissimo. Quæ diligenter et accurate correcta fuit per reverendum magistrum Joannem Benedictum Moncettum da Castilione Arretino, Regentem Patavinum, ordini Eremi-

tarum Divi Augustini, sacræque theologiæ doctorem excellentissimum." Moncetti dedicated the book to Cardinal Ippolito of Este in a preface which tells us that the original treatise of Dante was corrected, polished, and completed before being published. It is not therefore pretended that the work as we have it is written by Dante. The original manuscript is not forthcoming, and the work is not mentioned by any of Dante's biographers, even by Filelfo. A distinguished geologist Stoppani wrote an essay to show how Dante in this work anticipated a number of modern discoveries. (1) The effect of the moon on the tides. (2) The equality of the sea level. (3) The centripetal force of gravity. (4) The

sphericity of the earth. (5) The fact that tracts of dry land are merely excrescences of the earth's surface. (6) The predominance of continents in the Northern hemisphere. (7) The universality of the force of attraction. (8) The elasticity of vapour as a motive power. (9) The upheaval of continents. These statements prove too much, for the above-mentioned scientific facts, although unknown in the time of Dante, had been discovered before the publication of Moncetti. There can be no doubt therefore that the treatise is spurious. Bruni informs us that Dante wrote a beautiful hand, and that the form of his letters was long and thin.

Divina Commedia.

The first idea of the *Commedia* in Dante's mind dates from his early years,

when his Beatrice was still living. We see this from the *canzone* in § 19 of the *Vita Nuova*, where the words "e che dirà nell' Inferno a malnati: Io vidi la speranza de' beati" express an intention of writing a work which shall comprise a journey through Hell, if not through Paradise. In the last paragraph of the *Vita Nuova* he expresses his determination not to speak any more of Beatrice until he can treat of her more worthily, and for that purpose he devotes himself to intense study. In the *Convito* he says very little about her; there can be no doubt, therefore, that the *Commedia* is the work promised in the last words of the *Vita Nuova*. We have reason for inferring that canto xix. of the *Inferno*

was not written until after the death of Clement V., which happened on April 20, 1314, and that the last cantos of the *Paradiso* were only completed just before the poet's death. We may therefore place the composition of the poem in the years which elapsed between the death of Henry VII. and the death of Dante himself, that is, between 1313 and 1321. The letter to Frate Ilario, which would imply that the poem was almost finished in 1306, is now considered as spurious. It is of course quite possible, as in Goethe's *Faust*, that portions of the poem may have been composed before the poet set himself to its systematic creation. The title given to his own poem by Dante is *Commedia*; the epithet *Divina* appears

for the first time on the title-page of the edition of Dolce, published at Venice by Giolito in 1555, Landino having called Dante himself *Divino* in the Florentine edition of 1481. Nothing is more remarkable in the poem than the symmetry of its construction. Its architecture is, so to speak, dominated by the perfect number ten, and by the two next most important numbers, three and nine. The *cantiche*, or large divisions, are three in number; the *terza rima* in which the poem is written is modelled on the number three. If we consider the first canto of the *Inferno* as a general introduction, there remain thirty-three cantos for each *cantica*, the three elevated to the dignity of a perfect number and multiplied by itself.

The whole poem consists of a hundred cantos, the perfect number multiplied by itself. Each of the three kingdoms has nine regions: that is, the Inferno has nine circles; Purgatory, an ante-Purgatory, seven circles, and the earthly Paradise; Paradise has nine heavens. But the influence of the perfect number is dominant throughout. The nine circles of Hell are preceded by a vestibule, ante-Purgatory is divided into three terraces. Purgatory, therefore, contains in all ten circles. Also there are three wild beasts which oppose Dante in his ascent of the mountain; three blessed ladies who take care of him in the court of heaven; three guides—Vergil, Beatrice, and St. Bernard. Lucifer has three

faces; three flames have their hearts on fire; there are three infernal furies stained with blood. It is also worthy of remark that the *Commedia* consists of 14,233 lines, which, if equally divided between the three *cantiche*, would give 4,744 for each. But the *Inferno* has only 4,720, the *Purgatorio* 4,755, and the *Paradiso* 4,758 lines. Indeed Dante tells us that the reason why he does not tell us any more about Purgatory is that all the leaves assigned to the second *cantica* are full. There can be no stronger proof of the sculpturesque accuracy with which the whole work was composed. For the understanding of the Divine poem, it is necessary to give some account of the universe as Dante conceived it. As Lucifer fell from Heaven,

the earth and the waters fled with horror at his approach. The earth as it shrank left a deep conical cavity, the pit of Hell; the waters collected on the other side of the earth, surrounding the island-mountain of Purgatory, formed by the Earth driven out by the fall of Lucifer. The pit of Hell lies just under Jerusalem; and the mountain of Purgatory, with the garden of the earthly Paradise at its summit, forms the antipodes of the Holy City. Lucifer lies entombed in the very centre of the Earth. The spheres of Paradise are inclosed in each other like the coats of an onion, surrounding the Earth, which is in their centre. They are ten in number; the heavens respectively of the Moon, of Mercury, of Venus,

of the Sun, of Mars, of Jupiter, of Saturn, of the Fixed Stars. The ninth is the Crystalline or transparent heaven, the existence of which is only apparent by the movement which it receives. Outside all these is the Empyrean, the home of God Himself and of the blessed spirits who are admitted to it. As the poet rises from sphere to sphere the forms of the blessed appear to him in each according to their several qualities, although the home of all of them is in the highest.

Hell.

Let us briefly trace the passage of the poet through these three kingdoms. At the opening of the poem Dante awakes from slumber, and finds that he has lost his way in a dark and tangled wood. When he comes out of it, he begins to

ascend a hill, illuminated by the rays of the sun; but he is prevented by three wild beasts—a panther, a lion, and a wolf. The poet Vergil now appears to him, and offers to guide him through Hell and Purgatory, as far as the earthly Paradise. Dante doubts whether he is fit to undertake such a journey, but Vergil comforts him, and announces to him that the Holy Virgin, Saint Lucy, and Beatrice have care of him, and that Beatrice has sent Vergil to conduct him. Dante at last consents. Thus is the first day spent—Palm Sunday of the year 1300. The Gate of Hell now appears before them, with its terrible inscription. They enter, and hear a confused sound of sighs, groans, and beatings of hands. They

first meet the cowards, who did neither good nor harm in life, tormented by insects, and running after a banner. They arrive at the shore of Acheron. Charon refuses to ferry across a living soul. He is transported in a mysterious manner whilst asleep, and, waking up, finds himself in Limbo, where are those who died without baptism and without faith,—the heroes, the philosophers, and the great poets of antiquity. From this point they descend into the darkness. At the entrance of the second circle stands Minos, who declares the sentence of the damned by the lashing of his tail around his body. In this circle are the self-indulgent, who are borne along by a ceaseless wind. Among them is Francesca da Rimini,

who tells the sad story of her love. Dante falls into a swoon for pity of her, and, waking up, finds himself in the third circle,—that of the gluttons, guarded by the dread Cerberus. Here they meet Ciacco, who predicts to Dante his exile from his country. Pluto, guardian of the circle of the misers and the spendthrifts, howls in an awful manner, and pronounces unintelligible sounds. Next is the marshy Styx, where the travellers see the punishment of the wrathful. The gates of the city of Dis are guarded by demons and fiends, who try to prevent their passage. They are admitted by the aid of a messenger from Heaven. Inside they find themselves in a vast cemetery. Heresiarchs and heretics lie in sepulchres of red-hot iron; among

them the emperor Frederick II., a pope, a cardinal, Farinata degli Uberti, who prevented the destruction of Florence, and Cavalcante Cavalcanti, who laments the death of his son Guido. After this, by a precipitous route, they reach the circle of the violent, guarded by the Minotaurs. Tyrants and homicides, among them Ezzelino, Obizzo da Este, and Guy de Montfort, are plunged in a river of boiling blood. The trees of a fetid wood, in which Harpies nestle, are found to be the bodies of suicides. Here is the unhappy Pier della Vigne. In the third division of the seventh circle, Capaneus lies on his back under a rain of fire, and still hurls defiance at Jupiter. They now arrive at Phlegethon, and meet those guilty of the sin

of Sodom,—among them clerics and men of letters, including Brunetto Latini, the preceptor of the poet. At the point where Phlegethon falls into a great abyss, Dante unties a mystic cord which he had round his wrist, and letting it down, Vergil gives a sign to Geryon, a strange monster, who comes up to take the two poets on his back, and to convey them to the eighth circle, called Malebolge, because it is divided into ten pits or *bolgie*. In these pits seducers are scourged by devils; flatterers are smothered in dung; simoniacs are fixed head downwards in a hole, while their feet are burnt with flame. Here Pope Nicholas III. awaits his successors Boniface VIII. and Clement V. In the fourth pit sooth-

sayers have their faces turned round to their backs; in the fifth, fraudulent merchants stand in a lake of boiling pitch. In the sixth, hypocrites are condemned to wear a heavy mantle of gilded lead. In the ninth pit we find Mahomet split into two from his chin to his trunk; Bertram de Born carrying his head in his hands; Geri del Bello, Dante's kinsman, his violent death not yet avenged. The ninth circle is represented as a huge well, from which the forms of giants rise like towers. Antæus takes the two poets in the palms of his hands and places them in the bottom. Here the betrayers of their relations, of their country, of their friends, and of humanity, are fixed in a frozen lake, some at a greater, some at a lesser depth,

according to the enormity of their offence. Here lies the unhappy Ugolino della Gheradesca, whose piteous story has resounded through the world. In the very centre of the earth is found the monstrous body of Lucifer, whose triple mouth holds the three typical traitors of the world—Judas, who betrayed Christ; Brutus and Cassius, who betrayed Cæsar. Dante now ties himself to Vergil's neck, and they climb together down the hairy sides of Lucifer, till they reach the central point of the universe. They then issue through the rent made by the fall of the rebel angel, and see the stars once more. Their passage through the circles of Hell has occupied two days—Monday and Tuesday in Holy Week.

The travellers now arrived at the moun- Purgatory.
tain of purification. They are welcomed by the Four Stars of the Southern Cross, never seen before save by first-created man. Cato stands as guardian of Purgatory. Dante, by the command of Cato, first purifies himself from the filth of Hell, and then proceeds to ascend the holy mountain. In Hell the descent had become more difficult as they went lower down; in Purgatory the mountain becomes gradually more easy to scale. Whilst the poets are thus standing on the shore, a boat approaches, impelled by the outspread wings of an angel at the stern, full of spirits, who come to be purified. Among them is the poet Casella, who addresses Dante in one of his own

poems. In the ante-Purgatory they meet king Manfred, who relates the tragic story of his death; the slothful Belacqua; Buonconte da Montefeltro; and Pia de' Tolomei, the heroine of painters and musicians; Sordello, the poet of Mantua, standing like a couching lion; and others who had deferred repentance till the day of their death. At night-fall the poet sleeps; St. Lucy raises him, still in slumber, and places him at the gate of St. Peter. Here an angel carves on his forehead seven P's with the point of his sword. He then opens the gate, and the two poets enter upon the true Purgatory. The mountain is surrounded by concentric terraces. On the first are the proud, weighed down by enormous weights. Among them are

Oderisi da Gubbio, the illuminator of manuscripts, and the haughty Provenzan Salvani. On the second terrace are the victims of envy, seated and clothed in dresses of hair-cloth, their eyes sealed by a thread of steel. Secret voices chant examples of humility, and of envy punished. On the third terrace stand the wrathful enveloped in a thick and pungent smoke. They see in visions examples of holy love and disastrous anger. The indifferent, of the fourth terrace, run in great haste. The misers of the fifth lie grovelling on the ground. Among them are Pope Hadrian V., Hugh Capet, Charles of Valois, and Philip le Bel. An earthquake announces that a soul has completed its term of purification. When

the soul appears, it is found to be Statius, who, from that moment, accompanies the poets. At the entrance to the sixth terrace is seen a mystic tree, and voices are heard uttering examples of temperance. Here are the gluttons, now horribly lean, desiring the food and drink which are denied to them. The last terrace contains the luxurious, or self-indulgent, who wander about singing in a sea of fire. Among them are Guido Guinicelli and Arnaldo Daniello. The poets are also compelled to pass through the fire. Dante hesitates; but Vergil reassures him, and at the sound of the name of Beatrice he throws himself into the flame, crosses it, and finds that the seven P's on his brow are obliterated. Vergil declares that he can

no longer act as guide, and suddenly disappears. Dante is now on the verge of the terrestrial Paradise. He sees Matilda on the other side of a stream, singing and gathering flowers. Here a magnificent vision meets his gaze, which represents the fortune of the Church, from its foundation to the transference of the papal see to Avignon. Beatrice now appears to him. He drinks of the waters of Lethe and of Eunoe, and feels himself purified, and ready to mount upwards to the stars.

Beatrice fixes her eyes upon the sun, Dante his eyes on those of Beatrice. They pass through the sphere of fire and reach that of the moon. Here appear to them the spirits who have proved false to their vows. Then, quick

Paradiso.

as lightning, they ascend to the heaven of Mercury; at each ascent Beatrice, already divinely fair, becomes more beautiful, more brilliant, more smiling. In Mercury are seen the souls of those who worked hard for the desire of honour. The emperor Justinian is taken as their type. In the heaven of Venus Charles Martel shows himself among the spirits of love. In the heaven of the Sun the spirits of wisdom are manifest, seen not by their colour, but by their more brilliant light. Thomas Aquinas relates the life of St. Francis of Assisi, Bonaventura that of St. Dominic. In Mars the militant spirits show themselves in the form of a dazzling cross. Here Cacciaguida, Dante's ancestor, speaks to the poet

of himself and his exploits, and announces the future glory of the poet, his descendant. In Jupiter the spirits who loved justice upon earth arrange themselves in the form of an eagle, the imperial ensign. The heaven of Saturn is assigned to the contemplative spirits, and Jacob's ladder appears leading mysteriously to heaven. Among them are Pier Damiano and St. Benedict. After this Dante rises to the heaven of the fixed stars in the constellation of the Twins, under which he was born. Strengthened by Beatrice, he turns his eyes to the universe which he has left beneath him, and especially to the tiny earth of which we are so proud. The triumph of Christ is described and the coronation of the Virgin. St. Peter

examines Dante in faith, St. James in hope, and St. John in love, while the whole of Paradise resounds with a hymn of glory to the Holy Trinity. Dante and Beatrice now ascend to the crystalline heaven or the Primum Mobile. Dante sees the nine choirs of angels which circle in inverse order round a radiant point of light, the choir nearest to the point being the quickest, that most distant from it the slowest. Then follows the empyrean, in which there is neither time nor motion, but only light, love, and joy. In the heavenly Rose Dante sees the seat destined for Henry VII. Beatrice leaves her faithful lover and returns to her own seat in the third circle. St. Bernard takes her place, and guides Dante to the ultimate end of

man,—that is, the perfect happiness which consists in the vision of the divinity. He shows him Mary the Queen of Heaven, together with Gabriel, Adam, Moses, Peter, John, and other heroes of the faith. After a sublime prayer, Dante is permitted to gaze on the sublime mysteries of salvation, the Trinity, and the union of the Divine and human natures in Christ.

Dante died September 14, 1321, and the first finished edition of the *Divine Comedy* was published in 1472. Therefore for a hundred and fifty years this immortal work was made known by means of manuscripts, of which more than five hundred are known to exist. Attempts have been made by Täuber and by Mr. Edward Moore to divide

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them into families with considerable success. In this way Täuber has arranged three hundred and ninety manuscripts into seventeen categories. The recovery of Dante's original manuscript is perhaps not altogether hopeless. In the course of the last four hundred years about three hundred and fifty editions of Dante have been published, of which fifteen appeared in the fifteenth century, thirty in the sixteenth, three in the seventeenth, thirty-one in the eighteenth, and the rest in the nineteenth. The editions of the fifteenth century probably reproduce more or less faithfully some particular codex. The foundation of all later editions is the Aldine of 1502, printed from a manuscript belonging to

Cardinal Bembo. The edition of Della Crusca, edited by Bastiano dei Reni in 1595, introduced about six hundred and fifty changes, mostly arbitrary, into the Aldine text, and has been frequently reprinted. Volpi, in his edition called the *Cominiana*, published at Padua in 1726–27, corrected many errors and added some useful indices, and a similar text was undertaken by the Four Florentines in 1837, among whom was Gino Capponi. The first really critical edition of the *Commedia*, is that of Karl Witte, published at Berlin 1862. It is based on the authority of four manuscripts, those of Santa Croce, of the Vatican, of Berlin, and of the Caetani family, the readings of which are registered with great

accuracy, as are also those of the Aldine della Cruscan and Four Florentine editions. No reading is admitted into the text which is not supported by the authority of at least one of these manuscripts. Besides these we may mention the reprint of four primitive editions of the *Commedia*, those of Jesi Foligno, Mantua and Naples, published by Lord Vernon in 1858, the first Florentine edition of Landino, 1481, with engravings taken from Botticelli's drawings and the Paduan edition of 1822, in five volumes, reprinted in one volume at Prato in 1847–52.

Dante died at the age of fifty-six. Scartazzini remarks that if he had lived twenty years longer he would have probably written his own commen-

tary on the *Commedia*, which would have made others almost superfluous. As it is, we possess a number of commentaries written, if not during the poet's life, at least immediately after his death. Perhaps the oldest is the anonymous commentary published by Selmi at Turin, in 1865. Selmi believes that the notes were written either in the year of Dante's death or a year later. The writer belonged to the faction of the Neri; he does not therefore show himself particularly friendly either to Dante or to the sentiments he expresses. His historical and exegetical authority is very small.

The anonymous commentary published by Lord Vernon at Florence, in 1848, is a translation of the Latin notes

of Ser Graziulo de' Bambagiuoli, written in 1324. This commentary contains some historical notices of importance. The commentary attributed to Jacopo, the son of Dante (Florence, 1848), was written in 1323 or 1324, and is attested "Io Jacopo, figliuolo di Dante"; it has very little value. The commentary of Jacopo della Lana, of Bologna, written between 1321 and 1328, is of very great importance. It exists in forty-two manuscripts, and was the first commentary that was printed, as it occurs both in the edition of Vindolin of Paris, in 1477, and in that of Nidobeata, at Milan, in 1477–78. It may be regarded as the father of all Dante commentaries.

Another commentary which, from its

great reputation, received the name of *Ottimo*, or the very best, was written probably by Andrea Lancia, a notary of Florence, about the year 1334. The author mentions his personal relations with Dante, and states that he had asked his advice about the meaning of certain verses. Scartazzini remarks that the commentator evidently wearied of his task before he reached the end of it. The notes to the *Inferno* were written almost entirely by himself; in those on the *Purgatory* he copies Della Lana freely, and in the *Paradise* has very little of his own. The historical notes of these two commentators are especially important. The *Ottimo* commentary was first published by Alessandro Torri, at Pisa, in 1827–29.

Another very important commentary is that of Pietro, the son of Dante, written in 1340. The principal value lies in its theological and scholastic erudition. It was first published at the expense of Lord Vernon, at Florence, in 1845. In 1373, the Florentines established a chair for public lectures on the text of Dante, and appointed to it Giovanni Boccaccio, the famous novelist, then in advanced years. He did not continue his commentary beyond canto xvi. of the *Inferno*. Scartazzini says that Boccaccio took as his model Dante's own commentary on the *Convito*. The commentary of Boccaccio was first printed at Naples in 1724. The most voluminous and historically the most important early commentator on

Dante is Benvenuto Rambaldi da Imola. It was written in Latin in 1379. The author probably attended the lectures of Boccaccio at Florence, and in 1375 expounded the *Commedia* at Bologne. Muratori made copious extracts from this commentary in the first volume of his *Antiquitates Italicæ*, but the work was not published until 1887, when it saw the light at Florence under the editorship of Sir James Lacaita, and at the expense of William Warren Vernon. The last of the commentators of the fourteenth century is Dianesso da Buti, who was born in 1324 near Pisa, and died at Pisa in 1406. He lectured on the *Commedia* in the University of Pisa. Buti applied his attention especially to questions of grammar. This commen-

tary was published at Pisa by Crescentino Giannini in 1858–62. The commentary of the *Anonimo Fiorentino*, which dates from the end of the fourteenth to the beginning of the fifteenth century, is said by Scartazzini to contain very little that is original. It is obvious that the most important of these ancient commentaries are those of Jacopo della Lana, Pietro di Dante, Boccaccio, Benvenuto de Imola, and Buti.

Passing to later times, the commentary of Lambino, published at Florence in 1482, is of great value. Amongst modern commentaries, that of Scartazzini, published by Brockhaus of Leipzig, with a fourth volume of Prolegomeni, is by far the best. The translations of king John of Saxony,

under the name of Philalethes, and of Karl Witte also contain admirable notes. We should also mention the special dictionaries of Blanc, Bocci and Poletto, and the concordance of L. A. Fay.

Dante has been translated into almost all modern languages; the earliest versions are probably those into Provençal, several of which exist in manuscript, but have never been published. The principal translations in English are those of Cary (1806); F. Pollock; J. A. Carlyle, of the *Inferno*, only into prose, 1849; Longfellow, 1867; and Butler of the *Purgatory* and *Paradise*. The most widely read translation is that of Longfellow, and it perhaps gives the best idea of the original. The

notes also are extremely good. The best German translation—indeed indispensable to the student on account of its admirable notes—is that of Philalethes mentioned above. The translation of Musurus into modern Greek is also worthy of especial commendation.

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